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THE  
EFFICACY OF THE GOSPEL  
CONSIDERED, WITH REFERENCE TO  
ROMAN  
CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

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A  
SERMON

PREACHED IN THE  
SOUTH CHURCH, DUNDEE,  
ON SABBATH AFTERNOON,  
April 12, 1829.

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BY  
ALEXANDER ARCHER,  
PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

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MDCCCXXIX.





## PREFACE.

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THE request of friends is not infrequently pleaded in excuse for submitting insular Discourses upon particular occasions to the observation of the public. Had I been solicited, however, by no other inducement, I may remark, that I never would have yielded to the publication of this hasty production. To this necessity I am impelled by a desire to counteract that misrepresentation with which I have been pretty generally assailed, by those who are hostile to the opinions contained in the following pages. I have no wish whatever to escape from the charges which have been brought against me, either for my entertaining these opinions, or for my declaration of them: But I would not willingly suffer under the imputation of sentiments which I never cherished, and consequently never would have expressed. The Roman Catholic relief bill, pending in the House of Lords about the date when this Sermon was preached, has now been passed into a law, under the auspices and with the concurrence of the most enlightened men of these times; and it is not to be supposed that I can in the least be affected by the reproach which has been discountenanced by such high authority. I am aware of the cavils to which I expose myself by laying this Sermon before the public. As a composition, I regret that it will be found in this form unworthy of the commendation which in some instances it

received upon its delivery ; and, were I anxious to shield it in this respect, I could offer an ample excuse for the laxity which pervades it in the haste and discouragement in which it was written. My object, however, as I have stated, is to provide against the misrepresentation of the principles which it evolves, and to free myself, if possible, from all unauthorized imputations. With this view, I have closely adhered to the order and terms in which it was preached,—not considering myself entitled to make any alteration, or even to avail myself of the benefit resulting to my arguments, by here introducing that condensed statement and application of the whole, which, in the pulpit, I mentioned I was compelled to overpass for want of time. In allusion to circumstances which have since occurred, I take this opportunity to observe, that, while I greatly regret the loss of that patronage in which I confided, I trust I will never be found to *und deserve* it, by the sacrifice of principle, or by the neglect of exercising what my conscience proclaims to be as well my privilege as my duty.

A. A.

*Dundee, April 1829.*

# SERMON.

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PROVERBS, xvi. 6.

*“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged.”*

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SUPPOSE, my friends, that I were to lead you into a sick chamber, and to discover to your sight a human being, the victim of some appalling disease—a brother, whose native comeliness and strength had already melted under the touch of mortality, and all whose harmonious functions of body and mind had fallen into complete disorder and disuse,—suppose that this person were no longer able to go forth upon those walks of mercy, or to compass those generous charities, wherein he once greatly delighted, but that his feet were confined to the scanty floor of his narrow chamber, and his sympathy engrossed by his own personal sufferings, or vainly lavished upon the fictions of a bewildered imagination,—suppose, in short, that he were sullied by all the dishonour and impoverished by all the disabilities to which man



is liable, and consequently unfitted for the discharge of all those duties and humanities so congenial to society, and reduced to an object of the most helpless and pitiable commiseration,—I doubt not but most of you would go away from such a melancholy spectacle with torn and lacerated feelings. The recollection of it would haunt the gayeties of your wakeful hours, and inscribe its features upon the visions which flit through your night's repose. And were I, amid all the dusky and morbid sensibilities which such a hopeless sympathy would excite within you, to usher the individual whose condition had possessed you with such emotions, at once into your astonished presence, not a wan and diseased apparition rifled of all bloom and lustre—not a dazzling and unearthly statue, clothed with the taint and whiteness of a sick-bed—but a *man*—a living man—glowing and instinct with health—with the pencilling of beauty on his cheeks, and blood tiding through his veins, and voice murmuring upon his lips, and reason triumphing in his eyes,—were I to exhibit to you the subject of such a wondrous transformation, and, while he was yet in your presence, to acquaint you with the history of his cure—to inform you with what potent balsams he had been purified, and in what softening and restorative wells he had been steeped, and promoted to such a perfect and glorious recovery,—would not the light



shed by this single experiment be alone sufficient to convince you of the virtue of the medicaments used? And, if they were used yet again and again with the same splendid and undiminished success, would not all your doubts as to their efficacy be completely and finally removed? And if any friend, any individual, within the compass of your relationship, to whom you were bound to render the charities of brotherhood, or whom your sympathy constrained you to relieve, were similarly afflicted, would you not resort at once to the same means of cure, and, rejecting all other pretended specifics, in defiance of popular prejudice and vituperation, set about his recovery in the appointed way,—adhering most scrupulously to the experience of former cases, under the conviction that, by such an adherence alone, your endeavours would ultimately be crowned with the same signal and glorious success?

That your conduct would be such in a case of this kind, I entertain no doubt;—in place, then, of natural, substitute spiritual or moral disease; and if I can actually bring before your observation the subject of such dishonour, first lying in pollution, and afterwards purged and gloriously transformed, and finally acquaint you with the means whereby this bright result has been produced, surely you will agree with me in thinking that the analogy of the former case

ought to be pursued, and the means, thus magnified by success, used in future for the removal of similar afflictions from our brethren, in defiance of all the prejudice which the unskilful may entertain against them, in favour of more popular, although less powerful and efficacious specifics.

Now, that spiritual and moral depravity not only exist, and are common to man, but that they have been also purged, and moral harmony and vigour restored, surely no one in this enlightened audience will deny.— It is the experience of every true and genuine Christian. But, as I wish my argument to be understood by all who live under the light of Christianity, whether *regenerated* or not, I shall build it upon the moral and outward, rather than upon the spiritual and internal evidences of transformation, which evidences can be apprehended by the judgments of all : And, without condescending upon individual experience, I shall enter at once upon that collective testimony which the page of unexceptionable history presents for our consideration. Let us retire, then, into the recesses of the past, and, taking our stand, with the second Cæsar, in old Rome, the metropolis of the earth, let us advance our eyes upon the mighty prospect of a subject world, (and examine the moral scenery and habits which adorn and diversify that ample

continent which expands beneath our gaze.) There are, it is true, groves of imposing solemnity, and temples of usurping pomp, and altars of aspiring incense ; but, could we penetrate the exterior gloom and marble, and behold what abominations are wrought within, we would revolt at the affrightening spectacle,—could we go in, as Ezekiel did in vision, and behold “every form of creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the world pourtrayed upon the walls round about,” and comprehend with full and open eye all the (shut up and muffled mysteries which are transacted in these chambers of imagery,) we would shudder with amazement, and gladly recoil, if it were possible, into our former ignorance, as those who have looked into forbidden and unlawful things. There is a religion, then, upon the earth, but there is no morality : The nations have, with one accord, said among themselves,

“Evil, be thou our good !”

They have deified the worst of human passions ; and, to appease this wretched theocracy, have given themselves up unto the dominion of all lust and immorality : There is a faith, but there is no hope—“darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the sea,”—the hope of existence is circumscribed by the horizon of mortality, and all beyond is filled with fears, and blank,



and unutterable amazement,—the world is all “a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.” Let us now overleap some successive ages, and again fix our gaze upon the same space, and contrast former appearances with those which now occupy their room. There are still to be seen temples of ancient fame, and lingering companies of worshippers; but the immense human tide hath rolled away from their porches—there still desponds the deathly pall of an inhuman smoke above the Valley of Hinnom: But the thick moral obscurity which mantled the globe is in many places withdrawn, and glorious vistas of hope opened up, through which the eye discerns a prospect of incomparable loveliness—a continent of celestial bloom and abundance—a sky of clear and unruffled transparency—“inheritances incorruptible and undefiled and which fade not away, eternal in the heavens!” Surely some mighty agency hath been exerted in accomplishing such a transformation: But let us not stop here, rapt in the gaze of an idle wonderment; but let us come nearer our own times and country, and we will behold not less wonderful though perhaps more familiar things than these: From the eminence of a few bygone years let us take a hasty glance at the condition of this land: As far as the eye



can reach, its inhabitants are “sitting under the darkness and the shadow of death ;” there is no expansive sympathy rejoicing to go forth upon a moral pilgrimage of mercy and benevolence—no enlightened philosophy aspiring unto the heights of physical science, but the fetters of a degrading spiritual despotism have confined and destroyed all the free-born energies of man : Every one is for himself, and none for his brother ; and the human soul sitteth uncovered of her splendour, and concealed within the mantle of a selfish and disparaging ignorance : There is no system of enlightened national policy—there is no national harmony—“might usurps it over right,” and every petty tyrant lowers upon the general peace and happiness of society—the nation is seized with complex and contrarious diseases “crippled and out of joint,” every member unable or unwilling to perform its proper functions—exhibiting altogether the appearance rather of a broken corpse than of a harmonious and active community. Let us now turn our eyes away from this painful meditation, and fix them upon the prospect which the present time yieldeth : O what a lustre is shed upon all the regions of human thought and of human action ! The chains of spiritual oppression have fallen away—the soul of man, like a dusky mole, is no longer wrapt about with selfishness and ignorance, but

like a glistering dove (chaste emblem of Christian purity !) she bathes in sunshine, and delights herself in expatiating at ease and freedom amid all those ethereal fields of moral and natural speculation which are open to the legitimate excursion of man. What though she hath “lain among the pots, her wings are now covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold !” and if some melancholy specks of that pollution out of which she hath come still cleave unto her, they are daily disappearing, and will in time vanish away, leaving her beauty and her resplendence perfected. And overpassing all that harmony and propriety which now characterize our national corporation, and all that goodly morality which runs throughout our domestic legislation, and is reflected in the conduct of the several orders which compose society : O what a pleasing economy of artificial and natural piety, if I may be allowed the phrase, discovers itself in the institutions and habits of our land—in the schools and

“ Churches, whose pinnacles do point to heaven,”

Which are planted in the cities and in the fields—in those exercises of devotion—those melodies of prayers and praises which morning and evening resound from the dwellings of the righteous—in the music of those Sabbath bells, at whose sweet tumult the ham-

lets of our country scenes pour forth their inmates, strewing every church-walk with peaceful families—fathers and mothers, and smiling children and babes, in one hallowed cluster—and the mansions of our cities unlock their flood-gates, making every channel to glow with the full tide of their religious population, until we might be almost tempted to say in the language of Scripture, “righteousness runs down our streets like a river, and judgment like a mighty torrent.” Behold, I entreat you, all these glorious transformations, and let us no longer entertain any doubt as to the possibility of purifying mankind from moral depravity, and promoting them unto moral health and happiness: But let us give ourselves diligently to inquire into the means whereby this recovery is effected; and, having detected them, let the magnificent results with which their application has been followed in the cases we have been considering, satisfy us as to their efficiency in all cases to come, and justify us in using them against all the heat and violence of an unstable and misdirected popular enthusiasm.

But how can we attain to the knowledge of that wonderful secret which hath produced such illustrious effects? There is indeed, my friends, no secret whatever in the matter: The word is nigh unto us—it is even in our



mouths—"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged." Mercy and truth is that celestial compound by virtue of which the pollution of moral disease can alone be cleared away. Such at least is the information furnished us by the Holy Scriptures in which we believe, and upon our faith in which, our loftiest interests depend ; and this information is not gleaned from one solitary page of that divine volume, although that would have been in itself sufficient ; but it is recorded therein again and again, as though its sovereignty could be never enough extolled, Proverbs iii. 3, "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee ; bind them about thy neck ; write them upon the table of thine heart, so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and of man ;" so shall polluted and sinful flesh find favour before him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And again, Psalm lvii. 3, David, in the apprehension of being destroyed by unholy adversaries, solaces and confirms himself by this assurance,—“God shall send forth his mercy and truth.” God shall send forth his mercy and truth, says he : It is a means by which the Almighty disdains not to execute his purposes on earth ; surely it is not for man then to presume to doubt of its excellency or to disparage it by any human prescription. But I rest not upon Scripture authority alone, although it



is the best of all—I am willing for the sake of my argument to descend again to the ground of human experience, as that experience is recorded in history ; and upon this ground I assert freely and without let or qualification, that, as a portion of the human race and members of this community, we are indebted for the spiritual and moral changes which have passed upon us, solely to that “ mercy and truth ” which is specified in the text. To enter into the proof of this assertion would be altogether uncalled for, seeing that it has never been denied : By the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, were accomplished all those transforming miracles which we have attempted feebly to illustrate—by that Gospel the iniquity of the Gentile nations was purged—by that “ Grace and truth ” (for such is the scriptural analysis of the Gospel)—by that “ Grace and truth which came by Christ Jesus,” we were delivered—redeemed from the frightful bondage of spiritual despotism, and transformed into the glorious liberty which we now enjoy. And the channel of this deliverance was the preaching thereof in faithfulness and in charity, and this preaching was fulfilled not only in illustrating the understandings of the ignorant, but in relieving the miseries of the afflicted, and in exercising the meek and generous humanities of brotherhood towards all mankind. Infidelity hath disputed and denied the

heavenly origin of the Gospel ; but even infidelity hath never once refused it the honour of those achievements, which we have awarded to it. O then let us who are in the faith, beware how we disparage the divinity of its nature by repining that it should be freed at any time from the trammelling prescriptions of human wisdom ! Let us beware how we deny its excellency and its power by refusing it the acknowledgment of similar transcendent results : But if we individually, or as a people, have any brother or sister lying in that melancholy dilemma, out of which we were rescued thereby, let us manifest our implicit confidence in its undiminished virtues by religiously applying it unto the work of their purification and recovery ; and let us not be deterred from so doing by deference to the favour of men, but rather impelled to the performance thereof by our duty to God and our brother in affliction ; and if we be accounted for a time the presuming enthusiasts of an improvident theory, let us not be dispirited by such an unlearned opposition, but let us repose upon the conviction that we proceed upon the presumptions of inductive philosophy, the surest of all human plausibilities—and not only so, but upon the stedfast and immovable assurance of divine revelation, even upon the “ Word of the Lord which endureth for ever ;” and let us take consolation from the

hope that our faith in this "Gospel of grace and truth" will not long remain under the stigma of enthusiasm, but will be vindicated by its eventually approving itself to be indeed that heavenly alchymy whereby iniquity is purged and a glorious transmutation unto holiness effected and permanently secured.

I dare say, my brethren, you already clearly discern upon what particular territory I am willing to trespass; and, for doing so, in this pulpit, *unadvisedly*, with my own *sole knowledge* and at my own sole responsibility, I have no other apology to offer than that I consider the Gospel of Christ Jesus ought to be preached not abstractly, as a metaphysical system, but relatively, as applicable to the circumstances of the times in which we live—for the reproof and correction of error and abuse, and the support and confirmation of whatever consists with Christian charity and principle: Which apology, however unsatisfactory it may appear to some, I confess I do in truth hold to be ample and sufficient.

In the spirit of humility and of meekness, then, I proceed to illustrate some of the peculiarities of this question which affect our duty as Christians; and, without pretending to throw new light on a subject which has been so luminously exposed, or even to free myself from the charge of repeating thrice-told arguments, I



trust I will be able to unperplex it of some difficulties which it appears to me have not been quite satisfactorily disposed of, and to offer some other reasons for our being pleased with the present current of national proceedings—applying the doctrine which is contained in the text, as well as the spirit of that analogy which we have attempted to draw in the preceding remarks, as often as occasion may require.

I begin, then, by repelling that insidious accusation of extreme intolerance which has been brought against the Founders of our constitution by those who term themselves Liberals—foolishly enough, I think, seeing that they are as illiberal as can be towards all who oppose them. This attempt may seem, at first sight, inconsistent with the enlightened and scriptural policy which I profess to advocate; but the apparent contrariety will evolve and disappear as I proceed. To form a fair and unbiassed judgment of the principles of these men, to whom we owe a debt of immeasurable and everlasting gratitude, we ought to consider both the times and the circumstances in which they were placed. To do this fully, would far exceed the limits which can here be appropriated to such a purpose. These things, however, we would premise, for the sake of the conclusion at which we wish to arrive. Our Fathers, it will be remembered, were once lying under the same



spiritual and moral depravity which at present degrades the sister country ; and their deliverance and purification was accomplished, as we have seen, solely by the preaching of that Gospel of " Grace and truth which came by Jesus." They had no cause of hatred against those who were the ministers of this gospel ; and, accordingly, like rational men, they gave their judgments to decide between the merits of the doctrines which they preached, and those in which they themselves believed. Principle thus became opposed to principle, error to truth ; and truth mightily prevailed. " The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light sprang up : " And, rising up from the soil of that pollution in which they had so long contentedly reposed, they shook off the ashes which dishonoured their locks, and came forth from obscurity and bondage, exulting in the glorious light and liberty of spiritual emancipation. For this assertion of their legitimate and natural independence, they were assailed by a long train of the most pitiless and relentless persecutions which the power and number of their enemies could inflict. And how did they approve themselves in the furnace of such trials, and against the violence of such overwhelming odds ? Did they gather together into one compact and resolute band, and oppose them with

the edge of the temporal sword? or did they overreach them by the ambush and contrivances of intricate human wisdom?—Nay, but their warfare was conducted with other than material weapons, and their policy meditated and matured by other than carnal prudence. By patient and meek endurance of persecution, and by composed and unfaltering martyrdom, they fought more successfully against the numbers, and consequently the power of their adversary, provoking their inquiry into those sublime and astonishing mysteries the belief in which could arm with such devoted and unblenching fortitude, than they could have done by any carnal resistance, however unyielding and complete. By the enlightened economy of such an opposition, the defection in the ranks of persecution soon became general, while the adherents of the Faith proportionally grew in number and in strength: And when at last, over-goaded by an unremitting and sanguinary pursuit, and no longer enduring to be hunted about, like “partridges on the mountains,” they mustered in anger, and warred sternly in blood—not for revenge, wantonly, but out of necessity for deliverance and safety,—was it any marvel that they should have endeavoured to secure stability and permanence to the mighty issues of their victory? Would they not have exhibited a most prodigal disesteem, both of present enjoyments

and of past sufferings, had they neglected to fortify those free-breathed heights unto which they had attained by such a slippery and fatiguing access ; and left unguarded by wall or battlement, that Paradise of religious plenty and tranquillity, which had been acquired by the toil of such a long and blushing struggle ? But, on the other hand, would they not have displayed a most unaccountable perversion of heart, as well as dereliction of duty, if, after witnessing such lofty confessions of personal disinterestedness, and of devotion to Christ, and zeal for the development and increase of his kingdom among their brethren, *these* men had all at once, and that too in the hour of victory, veered from their former principles, and blotted the lustre of their past achievements, by hemming themselves, as some do affirm, within a secure and insurmountable barrier, into a selfish and intolerant confederacy, and placing upon the gates of their peaceful Eden “ a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life ; lest any stranger entering in should put forth his hand and take also of this tree, and should eat and live for ever !” Instead of ascribing such anomalous, such infamous motives, to our venerable Reformers, which many, looking superficially at the present aspect of things do, ought we not rather, in the spirit of candour,



bearing in mind all their former heroic endurance, to *presume* upon their toleration, and then seek an apology for their conduct, if such indeed be necessary, in the early times in which they lived? There is nothing subversive of reason, or of sound judgment, in so doing; for, abolish the light which experience has thrown upon this subject, and there is no difficulty in showing how the measures which they framed, might have been conceived with the purest and most benevolent regards for their brethren. If by infusing their peculiar faith into that civil constitution, which men of a different persuasion, as their fellow-countrymen had still a right to participate in, (subordinately in proportion to their numbers and compatibility with the general safety,) it is objected that they arrogated to themselves an unjust and intolerant control over their brethren,—then I answer; that, as all men are watchful of known and esteemed privileges, and careful to seek after them, our Forefathers, by making the belief in their faith antecedent to the enjoyment of constitutional rights, appear to have been anxious, to secure for their own enlightened religion the positive consideration of all who aspired to political immunities—to lead them as it were by a humane constraint into necessary contact with that Gospel in which they themselves trusted, under the conviction



that truth had only to be opposed to error to be followed with the same victory which it had so gloriously achieved in their own personal experience: And if these were indeed the motives which guided them—if these laws of exclusion were indeed intended, in scripture phraseology as a “schoolmaster for bringing men unto Christ”—then the characters of those great men who framed them are vindicated from all that inconsistency and uncharitableness with which they have been aspersed. It is not my desire, however, to secure for them the praise of such perfect benevolence: I would take a middle course between extreme charity and extreme illiberality towards them; and I would argue that these enactments were intended by them, as well for the *enlargement* of religion in the way illustrated, as for the *security* thereof, which is now held up as their *only* design, and which, in the circumstances of their infantine, and of course unassured estate of religious freedom, it was their bounden duty to provide; and it forms no objection whatever to the Christian spirit by which they were animated, that it was paralyzed and counteracted by an unfortunate corporation. I would consider them as the authors of a great and untried experiment, the results of which have evolved in the sight of us their children; and if these results are not in harmony with those anticipated—

if they have not issued both in the enlargement and in the security of religion—we, and not our Fathers, are chargeable with all those evils to which the continuance of a misconceived policy may give birth; and, by refusing to substitute the spirit for the letter of their enactment, we do commit a stain upon their memory, and virtually frustrate the ends of that constitution which they were at such pains with the ungrudging expense of their own blood to establish. Let us examine, then, what these results are: Have the means employed produced the intended effect—have they filled our churches with the disciples of the Lord Jesus—have they been magnified by the recovery of multitudes into the faith of his Gospel—have they secured the external institutions of our religion in peace and tranquillity, and prevented the malice of its enemies from increasing against it? Alas! my friends the same ignorance still shrouds our brethren as with a thick pall—thicker than midnight; and the same deep-rooted moral depravity still dishonours them, and the same spiritual error still bewilders them; and, in place of that distaste which they formerly cherished toward our religion, they now entertain a hateful animosity, into which all the pride and passion of human nature have entered—a melancholy and dangerous frenzy, the violence and heat of which, it will require the most affectionate and

brotherly kindness to disarm, and the most potent and heavenly anodyne to allay. Instead of being constrained to give their consideration to the doctrines of our holy religion by these measures of exclusion, they who were prevented thereby from the enjoyment of political privileges went sullenly away, without deigning to give them a single thought,—cleaving, as has been well observed, with a more inveterate zeal, to that superstition which they considered was to be made the dishonoured sacrifice of power. O! had they but submitted to the humane constraint imposed upon them, and given their attention to that Gospel which was offered to their acceptance, they would have soon found that they were called, not indeed to make any sacrifice, but to participate in an infinitely great and glorious recompense; and we who are this day tasting that recompense which they refused, would have had as much reason to rejoice over their recovery unto the faith as we have to lament their confirmed and inveterate alienation: And, now that they have associated together, and avowed their stedfast and resolute determination to obtain constitutional immunities sooner or later, without any religious concession whatever, we are furnished with another melancholy proof of the vanity of all human wisdom,—seeing that those very measures which were de-



vised for our security, instead of shielding us from the power of this opposition, have given it strength and consistency to fulfil its determination, by the interposition of an animosity which hath not merely shut out the influences of our enlightened religion from a great people, but which hath also confined and shut them up within that blinding and terrific superstition, which, while it swaddles their minds as if they were very babes, leaves undiminished their whole physical energies to be directed against us in one gigantic combination, when and wheresoever it shall please the enemies of our peace to meditate.

It appears, then, that our Fathers are not guilty of that extreme intolerance with which they have been charged; and that we do not violate or destroy, but rather perfect and preserve, that constitution which they established, by removing from our brethren those disabilities which have so long prevented *our mutual* harmony, and *their* spiritual and moral and intellectual regeneration: And while, for the promotion of these great and desirable ends, we would substitute a more consistent policy, we ought to be admonished, by this instance of mistaken theory, against trusting to any means which have not already received the solution of experience. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, then, after what has been said, will imme-

diately suggest itself as the only economy which can appeal to this testimony in confirmation of its power and efficiency. "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." But this Gospel, it is objected, has been already preached among our brethren, and has not been attended with success. Verily this is a grievous and astounding accusation to be preferred against it! But, without choosing of words, I assert broadly and at once that it is not true. We have *not* preached the Gospel unto our brethren as we ought to have done: We have not preached it *fully and faithfully in mercy and truth, as did its divine Author*: We have not preached it in works of charity and of Christian benevolence, as he did: We have entertained them with the theory of religion, but we have not incorporated it with our practice towards them: We have shown them truth, but we have witholden mercy. Now, mercy should both precede and accompany truth. It was necessary for our Saviour, in the case of the deaf man, by an act of mercy to relieve him from his natural infirmity, before the mercy and truth of the Gospel which he preached, could be of any avail to him. Now, it appears to me to be the same thing whether a man be prevented from the reception of the truth by an imposed natural or moral disability.

There is no more necessary connexion between the preaching of the Gospel and the removal of the one, than of the other. The one is a vice of the body—the other of the mind : But both agree in closing the porches of the understanding ; and their removal in both cases is attended with the same effect,—namely, in opening these porches. Now, deliverance from any painful impediment is seldom or never unaccompanied with gratitude in the object of deliverance : By relieving our brethren then of the yoke which galls them so sorely, we would have their gratitude to fight in that cause, upon which, by disabusing them of their animosity, we qualify them to sit in judgment. We would constrain them not by national, but by natural laws—we would have human sympathy—strong and powerful human sympathy, to aid and facilitate the triumphs of truth—it is begotten of mercy, and therefore it is a legitimate instrument for our service in this cause—it is the instrument by which Heaven condescends chiefly to operate upon man. “I taught Ephraim to go, saith the Lord,” in the scripture of Hosea, “taking them by the hands ; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with the cords of a man, with the bands of love.” It is the condition—the distinction of a man—that he can be *drawn* only by the cords of love : We can compel the inferior animals to



our will by the bridle of force; but the spirit of a man is too intactile and ethereal to be subjected to gross and carnal constraints; every other cord he wasteth like flax, but to the invisible and strong bonds of affection he cowers his neck in meek and delighted submission. As men, then (and much more as Christians), ought we not to rejoice that the hope of deliverance is opened up unto our brethren, and that we will now be permitted to exercise the meek and fascinating charities of brotherhood one with another, without the embarrassing consciousness of unjust assumption on the one part, and unmerited subjection and degradation on the other. And if an intolerant faith should in some measure diminish the amount of their kind regards towards us, let us endeavour, by more abundant and overflowing testimonies of our affection, to make, if possible, their feelings of gratitude and love to us as *men*, triumph over their prejudices and hostilities to us as *Christians*.—And when by these melting charities we have dissolved their suspicions, and won their confidence, and overcome their hearts into love, and subdued their spirits into meekness, O then let our “charity rejoice towards them in truth!”—and that iniquity which hath compassed them about for ages, and which all the sagacity of man could not so much as alleviate, will be completely purged—and that error which hath so long de-

*ruled and by charity?*

ceived their souls, shall be despoiled of its sway, and its supremacy for ever thrown down and degraded. Error like a stalking-horse magnifieth itself against the war of physical weapons ; but, bring it into the presence of Truth, and at the rebuke of that heavenly seraph

“ Severe in youthful beauty,”

It will stand abashed : Light hath no fellowship with darkness, neither the Temple of the Lord with idols : Let but Truth then once enter into the hearts of our brethren, and that infallible Dagon which hath so long reigned within these fleshly temples, shall tumble from his pedestal overwhelmed by the presence and majesty of the simple and unaffected Truth.

It is really melancholy to think how much the honour and conquest of truth have been prevented by these unfortunate statutes. Instead of lamenting their repeal as the breaking down of her securities, the Church ought rather to rejoice that she is disencumbered of her useless and fatiguing armour, and rendered capable of a more vigilant and praiseworthy defence. Why should she be sorry that she is allowed to approve her skill in open field—or that she is exposed even to the hazard of wounds from her enemies ? Is it not by the thrusts of the adversary that invulnerable skill is eventually acquired ? True it is, she entereth not willing-

ly into warfare with flesh and blood, but with corrupt and evil principle. But this deliverance doth not only effectually secure her from the former warfare, by dissolving the league which uniteth both her friends and foes in one enterprise—it doth also clear the way for her entering upon the latter. Now, this is a most important and eventful consummation ; for upon this country, where enlightened Religion keeps her chief seat, the eyes of all Christendom have been fixed, as upon a platform of distinction, observant of the struggle between the Reformed and the Un-reformed Churches ; and the reason why the latter hath maintained such head against the former is, (just what has been often observed), because the quarrel between them is of a political and carnal rather than of a religious and spiritual nature,—so that as soon as this animosity is divested of its multiplicity, and reduced to a debate of Christian principle, that moment we may count victory won ; for error and carnal tradition can never cope with a weapon of such ethereal temper as truth wielded by the hands of Faith. And then it is, that the designs of Providence, in allowing error to magnify itself so long and so disparagingly against the truth in the sight of the earth, begin to evolve in that universal publicity, secured to the spectacle of its complete and final downfall. Of what consequences such



an event may be productive, it is not for me to determine. That it will impart a simultaneous conviction of the excellent power and glory of our religion, unto this theatre of over-gazing nations, I am not so sanguine as to hope ; but I am assured that it will beget a spirit of interest as to its real merits, whose inquisition will not rest ; and communicate an impulse of solicitude as to the issue thereof, whose undulations will not subside until the last victorious scene of this magnificent and world-engrossing drama. O then ! when such honour is to be achieved and such conquests realized, doth it not betray a most cowering and mean spirit to be still repining after the privacies of former inglorious ease—to be still lingering within the confinement of carnal securities, and refusing to go forth upon the arena of spiritual freedom and debate ? Instead of sitting in unconcerned attire, and lamenting that this statute knight-errantry, whereby men were compelled to do obeisance to that religion to which we have pledged our fealty, let our Church rather rejoice that she is now permitted to reap undivided the sole glory of religious enterprise : Let her arise from the dust, and “ lift up her stature like a palm-tree,” and shake off the fears which discompose her beauty, and go forth in the divinity of her imputed righteousness,—giving her feet space for errands of cha-

rity, and her lips freedom and breath for persuasion; and let her take for defence and for conquest, the helmet of salvation upon her head, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, in her hand; and let her battle it singly against all the mustering squadrons which Rome, that mother of abominations, can oppose to her, and put her trust in the Lord, and he will make her to rejoice over the necks of her adversaries, until her praises cover the earth, and her songs of deliverance dwell within the tops of the cedars: And having at last freed herself from the burning imputation of imbecility, which, in compact with power, she hath increasingly sustained in this protracted struggle against Papal usurpation within her very porches—and, by “mercy and truth,” purged away the iniquity which defileth her borders—and bound the cruel despotism of spiritual ignorance unto the chariot-wheels of Gospel light and deliverance—let her ride forth in purity and enlargement unto the ends of the earth, over the high places of iniquity and error,—triumphing gloriously, and amid the myriads whom idolatry and unbelief still array against the truth, “conquering and to conquer!”

It was my intention to have given you a condensed view of the subject which I have thus at large illustrated, and to have concluded with an individual and practical applica-

tion ; but as I have already encroached by far too long on your attention, I would only now remark in conclusion, that while all the circumstances which I have adduced conspire in making me to rejoice at the assured prospect of deliverance for our dearly-beloved brethren, I do at the same time entertain the most cordial and affectionate regard for those who find therein matter of repining and regret. There are many who advocate the policy to which I have been endeavouring to sway your minds, who are actuated therein by no Christian principle—who have no heart-cherished religion whatever—who have nothing, in short, to lose, and can therefore be *liberal* at no expense : But I am convinced that the *mass* of those opposed to it are guided solely by conscientious considerations ; and I venerate and rejoice over the solicitude which they have displayed in the cause of religion,—because it shows that they entertain a proper esteem and valuation for their Christian privileges ; and also, as has been well observed by high authority,\* “ a deep-rooted aversion ” to those principles of error which have so long abused our brethren : And the reason why I am compelled to differ from them in this measure is, not because my heart refuses to entertain the same

\* See Dr Thomson's Letter on the Catholic Question.



sympathy with the'rs for the safety of our religion, and to delight itself in the "communion of the saints," but because it would secure it more widely and immoveably in the conviction of innumerable hearts added to its sway, and would expatiate in the fellowship of thousands and tens of thousands more rescued into its salvation: But, whatever difference of opinion as to duty on this point may be between us, I am assured in this one thing we are agreed, that it is our duty to repose our confidence in the Most High, "who ruleth among the children of men, and turneth their hearts wheresoever he willeth;" and, leaving the issue of this eventful question in his hands, with one accord to besiege his throne with prayers for the stability and enlargement of our Zion; and, "for our Jerusalem's sake, not to rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth!"

